



St. J.

BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31st, 1917,

By WALTER GARMAN, M.D., EDIN.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

The Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

Printed by Order of the Town Council.

WEDNESBURY:

PRINTED BY RYDER AND SON, SPRING HEAD.



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STATISTICAL AND GENERAL SANITARY MEMORANDA, 1917.

Area in acres	2,287
Estimated Population, exclusive of Men on Military Service						29,760
Population per acre	...	...	...	...	...	13·0
Number of Houses in Borough		...	...	...	...	6,108
Number of Persons per House		...	...	...	...	4·87
Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	...	21·3
Death Rate	...	...	...	...	...	14·2
Infantile Death Rate per 1000 births	...	...	...	...	...	94
Total Deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis	...	...	...	...	...	7
Infantile Mortality from Diarrhœa and Enteritis, per 1,000						
Births	...	...	...	...	...	4·9
Total Deaths under 5 years of age	...	...	...	...	...	146
Death Rate of Children under 5 years of age	...	...	...	...	...	4·9
Respiratory Death Rate (excluding Phthisis)	...	...	...	...	...	2·9
Death Rate from Phthisis	...	...	...	...	...	0·7
Death Rate from other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	0·15
Zymotic Death Rate	...	...	...	...	...	1·6
Number of Cases of Infectious Diseases notified	...	...	...	...	...	652
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£106,060
Id. in the £ yields for General Purposes	£380
General District Rate	4s. 6d. in £
Poor Rate	4s. 8d. in £



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BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

REPORT

Upon the HEALTH OF WEDNESBURY, for the year 1917,
by WALTER GARMAN, M.D., Edin., Medical Officer of Health.

*To the Mayor and Members of the
Wednesbury Town Council.*

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting a Report upon the Health of Wednesbury for the year 1917.

The figures upon which the various rates are based apply only to the civil population, and are independent of the men on military service. These latter are dealt with separately by the Registrar General, and making allowance for the deduction, the population is fixed at 29,760 for the death-rate, and 33,175 for the birth-rate.

1.—Vital Statistics.

The births registered during 1917 numbered 707 (males 364, females 343), which represents a birth-rate of 21·3 per 1,000 of the population. The natural increase of the population by excess of births over deaths was 292. The deaths from all causes numbered 415, in which are included 94 occurring in Public Institutions outside the town. These figures give a death-rate of 14·2 per 1,000 of the population.

The deaths of children under five years of age numbered 146, or 35 per cent of the total deaths. Of these 67 were under one

year of age, a figure which is at the rate of 94 per 1,000 births. The following table furnishes an analysis of mortality under five years of age :—

TABLE I.

	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
Premature birth	17	29	15	21	12
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ...	36	25	39	17	36
Scarlet Fever	1	—	—	—	—
Measles	66	—	16	2	19
Whooping Cough	6	16	3	9	15
Diarrhœa	31	27	17	28	9
Diphtheria	3	1	1	3	1
Other Causes	86	84	59	57	54
	246	182	150	137	146
Percentage of Total Deaths	47·2	36·6	31·8	28·5	35

The next table gives the deaths due to Zymotic Disease for the past five years. The number for 1917 was 48, representing a Zymotic death-rate of 1·6 per 1,000.

TABLE II.

	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
Erysipelas	1	1	—	—	2
Puerperal Fever	—	—	4	1	—
Enteric Fever	2	1	1	1	1
Scarlet Fever	2	—	2	—	—
Measles	72	—	18	2	20
Diphtheria	4	2	2	5	1
Diarrhœa	31	27	17	28	9
Whooping Cough	6	17	3	9	15
	118	48	47	46	48
Death-rate per 1,000 ...	4·2	1·6	1·6	1·6	1·6

Following is a table showing the Vaccination performed during the year ended June 30th, 1917 :—

TABLE III.

Births Registered	Successfully Vaccinated	Insusceptible	Dead Unvaccinated	Medical Postponements	Certificates sent in of Conscientious Objections	Removals known	Removals Unknown	Unaccounted for
768	182	1	51	2	521	7	1	3

The Inquests held by the Coroner numbered 16, in which are included 10 deaths due to accident. They were as follows :—

Natural Causes	...	...	...	...	5
Accident	...	...	...	...	10
Suicide	...	...	...	...	1
					—
					16

There were also 11 Inquests held upon Wednesbury residents dying outside the Borough, viz.: nine due to accident, one to suicide, and one to natural causes.

TABLE IV.

VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING
1916 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year	Births			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths.		Nett Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Uncorrected number.	Nett.				Of Non-Residents Registered in the District.	Of Residents not Registered in the District.	Under 1 Year of age.		At all Ages.	
			Number	Rate	Number	Rate			Number	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	Number	Rate
1911	28108		851	32·2	414	14·7		52	129	151·5	466	16·5
1912	28108		831	29·2	361	12·8		66	93	111·9	427	15·1
1913	28108		868	30·8	458	17·3		63	132	152·0	521	18·5
1914	28910		929	32·1	429	14·8		68	129	136	497	17·1
1915	28414		780	27·4	392	16·5	1	79	89	114	471	16·5
1916	27776		787	26	395	17·2	8	85	79	101	480	17·2
1917	*29760		**707	21·3	321	14·2	5	94	67	94	415	14·2

* The population here given is exclusive of men on Military Service.

** Calculated upon a population of 33,175.

TABLE V.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING
THE YEAR 1917.

DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Number of Cases Notified.								Total Cases removed to Hospital.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.							
		Under 1.	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.	
Small-pox									
Cholera (C) Plague (P)									
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup)	5	1	1	2	1				
Erysipelas	17		1	2	3	5	3	3	
Scarlet fever	22	2	4	13		3			
Typhus fever									
Enteric fever	1					1			
Relapsing fever (R) ...									
Continued fever (C)									
Puerperal fever	1				1				
Cerebro-spinal Men- ingitis									
Poliomyelitis									
Ophthalmia Neona- torum	11	11							
Pulmonary Tubercu- losis... ..	51		3	3	14	22	9		
Other forms of Tuber- culosis	16	3	7	2	3	1			
Measles and German Measles	528	27	291	202	7	1			
Totals	652	44	307	224	29	33	12	3	

Isolation Hospital.—Wednesbury Isolation Hospital, Dangerfield Lane.

Total available Beds.—Twenty-two.

Number of diseases that can be concurrently treated.—One.

TABLE VI.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT DEATH DURING
THE YEAR 1917.

DISTRICT OF WEDNESBURY.

CAUSES OF DEATH. (Civilians only).					Males	Females
All Causes	...	...	...	...	238	177
Enteric fever	...	...	...	...	1	
Small-pox	...	...	...	...
Measles	...	...	...	...	13	7
Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...
Whooping cough	...	...	...	...	5	10
Diphtheria and croup	...	...	...	...		1
Influenza	...	...	...	...	2	1
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	1	1
Pulmonary tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	21	11
Tuberculous meningitis	...	...	...	...		3
Other tuberculous diseases	...	...	...	...	6	5
Cancer, malignant disease	...	...	...	...	9	11
Rheumatic fever	...	...	...	...
Meningitis	...	...	...	...	6	1
Organic heart disease	...	...	...	...	14	12
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	23	18
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	28	15
Other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	...	2	1
Diarrhœa, &c., (under 2 years)	...	...	...	...	4	5
Appendicitis and typhlitis	...	...	...	...		1
Cirrhosis of liver	...	...	...	...	1	
Alcoholism	...	...	...	...
Nephritis and Bright's disease	...	...	...	...	3	6
Puerperal fever	...	...	...	...
Parturition, apart from puerperal fever	...	...	...	...		2
Congenital debility, &c.	...	...	...	...	14	6
Violence, apart from suicide	...	...	...	...	13	5
Suicide	...	...	...	...		1
Other defined diseases	...	...	...	...	71	54
Causes ill-defined or unknown	...	...	...	...	1	
Special Causes (included above)						
Cerebro-spinal fever	...	...	...	...
Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	...	...	...	...	41	26
TOTAL BIRTHS	...	...	...	...	364	343
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	354	337
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	10	6

TABLE VII.

BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

INFANTILE MORTALITY, 1917. Nett deaths from stated causes at various ages under 1 Year of Age.

CAUSES OF DEATH.			Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	4 weeks and under 3 months.	3 months and under 6 months.	6 months and under 9 months.	9 months and under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
ALL CAUSES	}	Certified	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Uncertified	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	1	1	4	5
Diphtheria and Croup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Abdominal Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	3
Convulsions	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	3
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	1	5
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	3	10
Diarrhœa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Enteritis	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	1	1	2	...	6
Syphilis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	2
Premature Birth	...	...	9	...	1	1	11	1	...	...	...	12
Atrophy, Debility, and Marasmus	...	...	3	1	...	2	6	2	...	...	...	8
Other Causes	...	...	1	...	...	1	2	1	...	...	...	3
TOTALS			14	1	1	7	23	9	7	14	14	67

The Council will be able to gather from the foregoing figures such data as are needed in forming an opinion as to the health of the town during the past year.

As might be expected, the birth-rate was specially low. The low death-rate is a very gratifying fact, in spite of the occurrence during the year of measles and whooping cough in epidemic form; and it goes far to shew that war conditions during the third year of the Great War have been wonderfully well sustained by the mass of the people. Much has been said as to the high pressure at which the people, as a whole, have worked, and still more has been said as to the privations which have been suffered in the matter of food. The figures before you, however, tend to shew that the food supply in the main has proved adequate to the needs of the people, and that their work has done no great amount of harm. An insufficient food supply would certainly have had its reflex effect in the health of the children and infants. No such evidence is forthcoming; and, speaking generally, the health of the town during 1917 was excellent.

General Sanitary Work.

Under this heading there is practically nothing to report. The cost of all building materials, and the scarcity of labour, were even more prohibitive than in 1916, and all sanitary improvements have been at a standstill.

Acting on instructions from the Local Government Board, this report has been condensed to the lowest possible limits. I hope, nevertheless, that you will find all such particulars as are absolutely necessary.

I am,

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER GARMAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT,

FOR THE YEAR 1917

To the Mayor and Members of the Wednesbury Town Council.

Gentlemen,

Introduction.

I beg to submit my Eleventh Annual Report, as Sanitary Inspector for the Borough of Wednesbury, viz., for the year ended 31st December, 1917.

In deference to a request from the Local Government Board, the report has been considerably condensed, the customary tables being omitted, and only indispensable information included.

The difficulties in securing the execution of sanitary improvements have been intensified during the past year. It is to be feared that not only has the shortage of labour precluded many willing owners from carrying out many needed sanitary improvements, but has furnished a welcome excuse to owners who have always erred on the side of dilatoriness. The regrettable feature is that the continued neglect of the state of repair of the older properties is likely in the near future to add materially to the list of habitations which it is impossible to make reasonably fit for human habitation.

GENERAL SANITARY WORK.

Miscellaneous Inspections.

Over 3,107 visits and inspections have been made, including house to house inspections and investigations of complaints, and 1,712 re-inspections were made during the time work was in progress. A large number of defects were discovered, and measures were taken to try as far as possible to remedy the defects.

Notices Served and Proceedings.

One hundred and five preliminary or intimation notices have been served. A large number of letters were also sent to owners and occupiers requesting them to carry out sanitary improvements.

Ninety-nine statutory notices were served by order of the Council. In only one case were proceedings taken, viz., for the recovery of £24 16s. 3d. for sanitary work carried out in default. The money and 4s. 6d. costs were paid, and the summons withdrawn.

Drain Testing, etc.

Twenty-three tests were made of the drains and sanitary fittings of 11 premises, comprising 14 dwelling houses and five works.

Privy and Water Closet Accommodation.

During the year 17 privies and eight middens were abolished and replaced with 43 water closets and portable receptacles for the house refuse as follows :—12 privies converted into water closets; one privy rebuilt and converted into a water closet; four water closets substituted for privies; and 30 additional water closets (13 for males and 17 for females) provided in connection with factories and workshops.

Overcrowding.

A large number of cases of overcrowding exist, and if it were possible to deal with them on the basis of the Registrar General's definition of overcrowded tenements, the number of notices required would have largely increased. The present position of affairs, notwithstanding the absence of men on active service, is the worst in my experience. In view of the shortage of houses, notices were served only under exceptional circumstances.

Housing of the Working Classes.

Owing to the failure of building operations to keep pace with the growth of population, the demolition of houses unfit for occupation, and for the purposes of works' extension, there is a considerable deficiency of houses; and if to these be added the houses occupied which by a moderate exercise of the provisions of the Housing Acts should be closed and demolished, the total deficiency would amount to over 900 houses.

Having regard to the above facts, and the overcrowded state of so many of the houses, and the labour difficulty, it was not deemed desirable to make more than 18 formal representations under the Act. The Housing Scheme now under the consideration of the Council will no doubt relieve the present congested condition of affairs.

Twenty houses were dealt with under the Housing and Town Planning Act as unfit for human habitation, including two houses in respect to which proceedings had been taken in 1916, and further action taken during the year. Closing Orders were made in respect to 18 houses ; eight houses were thoroughly repaired ; eight houses were temporarily and nine permanently closed ; and four are under consideration at the present time.

Inspection of Factories and Workshops.

The factories, workshops, and outworkers' premises have been periodically visited, and the regulations respecting cleanliness, ventilation, etc., have been carried out. Five notices were received from the Home Office Inspectors respecting the unsuitable or insufficient sanitary accommodation at works. In several instances sanitary work of some magnitude was executed in order to comply with the notices served.

Infectious Disease.

The cases of infectious disease notified were visited and re-visited from time to time during the progress of the disease. Printed and verbal instructions were given for preventing the spread of disease, and the necessary disinfection was carried out at the termination of the disease.

Inspection of Slaughter-houses, Cowsheds, etc., and Food Supplies.

The slaughter-houses, cowsheds, etc., and all places where food is stored, prepared, or exposed for sale, have been periodically visited, and every effort was made to see that the regulations respecting cleanliness were adhered to. The necessity of carefully examining all food before exposing it for sale was impressed on the tradespeople, as at the present time, owing to the shortage of cold

storage, and the probability of delay in transit, food may have been delivered to them in an unwholesome condition.

Horse Ambulance.

Seventeen persons—16 suffering from illness and one from accident—were removed in the Ambulance. The total amount received for hire of the Ambulance was £9 9s. 6d.

Cleansing and the Removal of House Refuse.

The work of the removal of nightsoil from privies, etc., dry refuse from ashpits, and the weekly removal of the contents of the dust bins, has been carried out by the Contractor. In view of the shortage of labour, considerable delays in the emptyings of receptacles have from time to time occurred, but on the whole, taking into account the abnormal conditions prevailing, the work has been carried out in as satisfactory manner as possible, but at greatly increased cost.

I am,

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HERBERT TOPPING, ASSOC. ROYAL SAN. INST.,

Sanitary Inspector,

Certified Meat and Food Inspector.

